

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 PARIS 09225 01 OF 02 291849Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----291854Z 031275 /50

P R 291843Z MAR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1152  
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 09225

EXDIS

MOSCOW FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR US FR  
SUBJECT: HIGHEST LEVEL GESTURES TOWARD GISCARD AND  
BARRE THAT WOULD BE HELPFUL FOR INTERNAL  
POLITICAL OBJECTIVES

SUMMARY: EMBASSY PROPOSES TWO ACTIONS--A  
PRESIDENTIAL VISIT TO PARIS IN MAY AND AN INVITATION TO  
PRIME MINISTER BARRE TO MAKE AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO WASH-  
INGTON IN SEPTEMBER--EITHER OR BOTH FOR THE PRIMARY  
PURPOSE OF DEMONSTRATING THAT WHILE THE USG IS NEUTRAL  
IN FRENCH POLITICS, WE  
HAVE PRONOUNCED SYMPATHIES FOR THE PRESENT TEAM IN  
POWER. END SUMMARY.

1. EMBASSY'S ANNUAL POLICY ASSESSMENT, WHICH IS BEING  
TRANSMITTED SEPARATELY, CONCLUDES THAT FRENCH INTERNAL  
POLITICAL STABILITY WILL BE OUR PRIMARY INTEREST HERE  
DURING NEXT COUPLE OF YEARS. OUR ANALYSIS CONCLUDES  
THAT POLITICAL PATH MOST CONDUCTIVETO EMERGENCE OF  
BROAD CENTRIST ALLIANCE OVER MEDIUM TERM IS THROUGH A  
VICTORY IN THE 1978 LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS OF THE CUR-  
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PAGE 02 PARIS 09225 01 OF 02 291849Z

RENT GOVERNING COALITION LED BY PRESIDENT GISCARD  
D'ESTAING AND PRIME MINISTER BARRE. ALTHOUGH A VICTORY  
OF THE SOCIALIST-COMMUNIST COALITION NEED NOT NECES-  
SARILY END IN DISASTER, WE CONSIDER MUCH TOO RISKY FOR  
FOREIGN POLICY AND ECONOMIC REASONS EVEN A SHORT INTER-  
LUDE OF COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN THE FRENCH GOVERN-  
MENT.

2. THE USG, OF COURSE, CAN DO VERY LITTLE ABOUT THE OUTCOME OF THE 1978 ELECTIONS. INDEED, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE NOT RPT NOT DO ANYTHING THAT WOULD INJECT THE ELEMENT OF "US INTERFERENCE" INTO A CAMPAIGN THAT SHOULD BE FOUGHT ON MORE RELEVANT ISSUES. NEVERTHELESS, THE ELECTION LOOKS AS IF IT WILL BE A CLOSE ONE THAT COULD TURN ON AS LITTLE AS 500,000 VOTES. IN SUCH A TIGHT SITUATION, EVERY ELEMENT COUNTS. IN THIS REGARD, IT WOULD NOT HURT IF BOTH GISCARD AND BARRE COULD BE GIVEN THE TYPE OF PUBLIC ACCOLADE IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS WHICH WOULD ENHANCE THEIR RESPECTIVE IMAGES AS STATESMEN. THE EMBASSY FEELS THE FOLLOWING PROPOSALS WOULD HAVE A MAJOR FAVORABLE IMPACT.

A. PRESIDENTIAL VISIT DURING MAY SUMMITS

3. THE PRESIDENT AND GISCARD WILL HAVE THEIR FIRST MEETING AT THE LONDON ECONOMIC SUMMIT IN MAY. FOR INTERNAL POLITICAL REASONS, GISCARD WILL NOT ATTEND THE NATO SUMMIT IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING. THE DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL THAT GISCARD ATTENDED A NATO SUMMIT DINNER IN BRUSSELS IN 1975 TO DEMONSTRATE ALLIANCE SOLIDARITY WITH THE US. TO DEMONSTRATE THAT WE DO NOT CONSIDER GISCARD AN ODD MAN OUT, IT WOULD BE A MAJOR EVENT IF PRESIDENT CARTER COULD MAKE A "SURPRISE" VISIT TO

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PAGE 01 PARIS 09225 02 OF 02 291852Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----291909Z 031325 /50

P R 291843Z MAR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1153  
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 09225

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PARIS FOR A FEW HOURS ON THE WAY HOME FROM THE LONDON NATO SUMMIT. THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THIS WOULD GO A LONG WAY TOWARD DISSIPATING ANY DOUBT AMONG FRENCH VOTERS AS

TO THE REAL FEELINGS OF THE NEW ADMINISTRATION. RECENT PUBLICITY THAT THE USG IS NOW MORE NEUTRAL TOWARD FRENCH POLITICS THAN BEFORE HAS BEEN INTENTIONALLY EXAGGERATED IN THE FRENCH PRESS TO LOOK AS IF WE WOULD NOT BE UNHAPPY WITH A VICTORY OF THE LEFT. A PRESIDENTIAL VISIT WOULD REDRESS THE SITUATION IN GISCARD'S FAVOR AND HELP BUILD HIS DOMESTIC SUPPORT FOR THE ELEVEN-MONTH CAMPAIGN PRECEDING THE MARCH 1978 LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS.

B. AN INVITATION FOR BARRE TO VISIT WASHINGTON IN THE FALL

4. WHILE GISCARD HAS NOT FARED TOO WELL IN PUBLIC POPULARITY IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS, HIS NEW PRIME MINISTER, RAYMOND BARRE, HAS GOT OFF TO AN EXCELLENT START. HIS FIRMNESS, HIS IMAGE OF ECONOMIC COMPETENCE, AND HIS STRAIGHT TALK HAVE APPARENTLY APPEALED TO MANY PEOPLE IN ALL WALKS OF LIFE. TO THE EXTENT THAT BARRE'S POPULARITY CAN BE ENHANCED, THE CHANCES OF A GISCARD/BARRE VICTORY NEXT YEAR WILL BE AUGMENTED. THE USG CAN HELP, THE EMBASSY BELIEVES, BY INVITING BARRE TO  
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PAGE 02    PARIS 09225 02 OF 02 291852Z

VISIT WASHINGTON OFFICIALLY NEXT SEPTEMBER, PRIOR TO THE OPENING OF THE FALL PARLIAMENTARY SESSION IN OCTOBER. BY PITCHING HIS VISIT TOWARD ECONOMIC SUBJECTS, WE WOULD BE ABLE TO SHOW CONFIDENCE IN BARRE'S ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP.

5. A "SURPRISE" PRESIDENTIAL VISIT IN MAY AND AN OFFICIAL BARRE VISIT IN SEPTEMBER WOULD BE SUFFICIENTLY REMOVED FROM THE MARCH, 1977, AND MARCH, 1978, ELECTIONS TO PRECLUDE ACCUSATIONS OF US INTERFERENCE. IN ADDITION, IF SOCIALIST PARTY GENERAL SECRETARY FRANCOIS MITTERRAND VISITS WASHINGTON IN SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER AS HE CURRENTLY PLANS, AND IF HE IS RECEIVED AT HIGH LEVELS IN THE USG (WHICH THE EMBASSY WILL PERFORCE RECOMMEND), THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TWO PRECEDING PROPOSALS WOULD SERVE TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE US DOES NOT FAVOR A LEFT VICTORY.

6. FOR OPTIMUM IMPACT, THE EMBASSY WOULD HOPE BOTH PROPOSALS COULD BE ACCEPTED, BUT WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE PRESIDENT'S TIME IS EXTREMELY LIMITED AND THAT OTHER CONSIDERATIONS MAY MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR HIM TO ACCEPT OUR RECOMMENDATION THAT HE MAKE A SHORT STOP IN PARIS ON THE WAY BACK FROM THE NATO SUMMIT IN LONDON. WE HOPE, HOWEVER, THAT HAVING SEEN ALL THE OTHER NATO CHIEFS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT FIRST AT LONDON, PRESIDENT VISITING PARIS FOR A SHORT STAY WOULD NOT STIMULATE JEALOUSY AMONG THE OTHER ALLIES. EFFORT TO

HELP GISCARD IN DIFFICULT PERIOD WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE  
UNDERSTOOD AND APPROVED BY THE ALLIES. IN ANY EVENT,  
IF PRESIDENTIAL VISIT NOT POSSIBLE, EMBASSY HOPES THAT  
SPECIAL EFFORT COULD BE MADE TO ACCEPT RECOMMENDATION  
FOR BARRE VISIT IN FALL, INCLUDING A CALL ON  
PRESIDENT AT WHITE HOUSE.  
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Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009